

Franklin Township Human Relations Commission Meeting

Minutes of 3/25/2026

Present: Gary Rosenthal, Lalitha Mani, Sharon Czebotar, Samina Sattar, E Poustchi, Councilman Charles Onyejiaka, Elangkathir Elamaran, Edna Arguello-Hitcher, John Tibbs, Diya Patel

Excused: Nora Catiis

Absent: Pete Clark, John Samba, Kamla Sharma

Guest: Kerri Sullivan, Programing and Outreach Franklin Township Librarian

Police: Lloyd Fredericks, Police Safety Director, Officer Malcolm Belvin

Meeting called to order at [7:02 pm]

Guest Report: Kerri Sullivan reported that the library has forty to fifty programs per month for adults, as well as for children. Programs consist of technology support, fitness, and more. Additionally, these programs are aimed to be versatile and to fit anybody's interest. A program calendar was observed consisting of fitness, special, computer, book clubs, arts and programs as well as movies that are being played. Some programs are seen to be virtual while others are in person in locations such as the library on Demott Lane. All programs are stated to be free. To access and register to these programs, a website is used to access Zoom links if online as well as registration for in-person programs. Professional publications are used to decide which books are used to nominate and read in the book clubs as well. Over the past few years, there's been a local author fair within the township highlighting different authors in the area, ranging from children's books to novels. The library also works

with community groups and conducts extensive programs across a various number of subjects. If the HRC is interested in creating a display, the library has display cases that can hold such displays.

Police Report: Director Fredericks has been a police officer since 1999, and has been the SRO at both the middle school and the high school. His mission is to continue recruiting young officers that reflect the demographics of the town and continue adapting to new technological changes. He has a command post planned next month, in support of his mission. New Jersey has put together a “Goal Zero”: a goal of zero fatal accidents within the state. They are putting together a campaign to mitigate driving under the influence, reckless driving, and other factors that may contribute to fatal accidents. Drone usage is going to increase, for the purpose of monitoring to also support the “Goal Zero” project. These drones act as “eyes in the sky”. When a call comes into headquarters, a drone pilot is contacted and the drone is dispatched. Fredericks continued to eliminate rumors about data collection surrounding data collection where people are concerned of the usage of such data. He continued to explain how data is only used in times of need such as accidents, not to monitor people on a daily basis. Any data is not being collected by the police department for uses other than official police usage. There has been a step-up in patrols due to the war started and a rise in violence. All places of worship in the township are being patrolled by the FTPD, and the leaders of houses of worship are being informed regarding the increased presence of police activity. The FTPD receives guidance from the prosecutor’s office as well as our own community. A house of worship can request a walk through by the FTPD if they feel threatened in any way or manner. The Department of Homeland Security also assists in protecting houses of worship from any threats. There are retired officers working in all schools within Franklin Township. On top of that, there is a school resource officer at Franklin High School every day during the school year and the summer. Mr. Fredericks made it clear that policing is different nowadays. Recruitment can occur in places like

colleges such as Kean University. They make use of career days and junior academies to encourage the interest of pursuing the police field. He also adds the fact that some people frown upon the police due to certain perceptions which makes him strive to eliminate rumors about the police force. There's a fishing derby occurring during June 5th for kids in Colonial Park. There's also a youth academy occurring in July for the ages of seventh grade and up. The SRO officers will be conducting recruiting at the middle school and high schools. There will be a DEA takeback day in order for the police apartment to take back any medications/drugs with no questions asked. This will take place on April 25th. National Night Out will happen on August 4th at the Municipal Complex. There is a County Task Force that addresses criminal activities in the township, such as robberies, gang activity, and more. The department receives statistics from the state regarding crime happening, and addresses them as soon as possible by creating a task force, and more. Fredericks clearly stated that Franklin Township is a safe town. The department looks favorably to enforce penalties for aggressive driving using cameras already used at traffic lights as support to find such drivers. Reckless driving among youth is a large issue within the township, and the FTPD is looking to address it effectively. Officer Belvin gave a monthly report.

Other Business: Peter Clark is still working on the brochure. The brochure is yet to get printed at the high school. Striving for the goal of Franklin 250 Edna had met with community activists to speak with those with first-hand experience with indigenous communities and livelihoods. The main reason to speak with Indigenous brothers and sisters is to hopefully receive their approval of the overall program. The next step for the commission is to go to the 250 Committee and see ways to get involved in planning and conducting more inclusive events. Motion passed for HRC to continue with the 250 year committee. Edna and Samina will handle. Edna Reported In September, a flag raising usually happens at Rutgers University. The idea is to have some sort of a community celebration that is both educational and fun for families. The

celebration will aim to honor the various indigenous Lenape communities that lived in Franklin township. Council Liaison Charles reported that Saira Ijaz was approved as new HRC Commissioner for a three year term by the Township Council . She replaced Linda Montgomery Williams. Next meeting on April 22 with Father Lanza new pastor at St Mathias as the guest speaker

Meeting adjourned at **7:58 PM**

Respectfully Submitted,

Junior Commissioners Diya Patel & Elangkathir Elamaran